



**Connecting the Dots:  
Wildfire, Forest Health, and Sustainable Rural Economies**

**October 29, 2009  
8:45 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.**

***A Webposium sponsored by the Sierra Nevada Conservancy***

You are invited to attend a unique region-wide web-based symposium – a “webposium” – that gathers local, state, and national experts, policy-makers, environmental, industry and community representatives to discuss how to create cohesive and collaborative working groups and projects. The focus of these projects will be to improve watershed/forest resiliency and health by reducing the threat of wildfire while sustainably using forest “fuels” to create local jobs and economic resilience.

The morning session will incorporate a fascinating look at existing on-the-ground projects that are successfully using collaborative and cooperative processes to “get things done” in the forests and communities in their region. Speakers will discuss the economic devastation that some Sierra communities have faced and that others will likely face in dealing with mill closures, declines in forest health, increasing wildfire intensity and frequency, and other environmental and economic pressures. Other stakeholders will discuss current projects that show how the environment can be protected while stimulating sustainable economic benefits for surrounding communities. And finally, looking toward the future, government policy-makers, researchers, academics and funding experts will discuss what they see today, what we might expect tomorrow, funding opportunities and priorities, and what policy “course-corrections” might be needed to successfully protect our resources, reduce uncharacteristic fire threat and build resiliency into our environment and local economies.

But the morning session is only the beginning. The real action will occur in the early afternoon, when each regional participant group will be asked to weigh in on the information and opportunities presented. A goal of this webposium is to bring communities together throughout the Sierra to identify common goals upon which to build projects with broad community support that will 1) protect both natural and built environments from the devastation of catastrophic wildfire, 2) improve and maintain forest health, and 3) provide new, sustainable economic benefits to these rural communities.

Each panel will be a moderated “discussion” that has been created to get at the real issues and provide practical solutions and suggestions. No power points or “canned” presentations are allowed – just uncensored conversation among experts with wide and varied experience, priorities and perspectives.

A moderator will stimulate the discussion among panel members in each of these sessions. The morning sessions will be video-taped and video web-cast in real time to each of the nine regional locations throughout the Sierra Nevada. The afternoon regional discussions will also be moderated and will consider the information and perspectives presented in the morning.

The SNC will post the formal panel discussions on its website after the webposium has ended. The SNC will also gather the feedback from each afternoon regional discussion, compile it, and make it available to all participants and the public. The findings and recommendations developed by each regional group will be reviewed to determine how to best support local efforts being made to “connect the dots;” improve watershed/forest health and resiliency, reduce the threat of catastrophic wildfire, and provide for economic development opportunities in the rural communities of the Sierra Nevada.